



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

USADF & GE Collaborate to launch the Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Innovation Challenge

1. What is the USADF & GE Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Challenge?

It is a three-year, USD \$2 million challenge organized by USADF and GE, aimed at supporting local energy solutions to meet the needs of African enterprises and communities underserved by existing capacity. Challenge winners will qualify for up to \$100,000 per award, with 5-10 awards per year.

2. How does this relate to President Obama's Power Africa Initiative?

Power Africa is aimed at helping countries develop resources responsibly, build out power generation and transmission, and expand the reach of mini-grid and off-grid solutions. As Power Africa is rooted in partnerships, USADF and GE are collaborating on this project to provide grants for developing or expanding the use of proven off-grid electricity technologies benefitting rural and marginalized populations.

3. In what countries will the challenge be launched?

The USADF and GE Off-Grid Energy Challenge will launch in Nigeria and Kenya in the first year and may expand to other countries in years two and three.

4. How many awards will be granted per country?

We are targeting 2-3 awards in each country but this will be driven by the strength of the proposals received from both countries. Individual awards are to be no more than \$100,000 each.

5. Who is eligible to apply? What type of projects will be considered?

Eligible applicants include 100% African-owned-and-managed enterprises, associations, or organizations. They must not be governmental organizations or government owned or operated in any way. Only applicants operating in Nigeria or Kenya will be considered, and they must be legally registered in the project country (either Nigeria or Kenya), demonstrate the capacity to track and manage project resources, and operate in good standing with their local government.

The Challenge will consider initiatives from:

- Energy Service Providers: To deliver renewable energy to underserved marginal populations not serviced by the power grid;
- Community Associations, Cooperatives and Organizations: To secure energy for sustainable uses. This could include acquiring a proven technology or service to benefit its members.
- Private Company developing Energy Enabling Technology: To create innovative approaches to metering, payment, collections, and/or transmission appropriate for off-grid solutions.



6. What projects are eligible for entry?

Projects may include, but are not limited to, those that:

- Provide off-grid energy to rural or urban areas or populations currently lacking energy access.
- Demonstrate benefits to grassroots populations among other benefits.
- Involve development or distribution companies that use funds for business plans, studies to expand markets, test innovations or leverage financing with the goal of increasing service delivery of off-grid energy to marginalized populations.
- Introduce innovative payment or collection systems that can extend the reach of service delivery to marginalized populations.
- Projects may run up to 12 months in duration (not to exceed this period of time).
- Also, projects are to be managed, implemented and operated within one country only.

7. Is the challenge open to government-owned or -operated organizations?

No. It is only open to privately-owned small or medium enterprises (SMEs), associations, or other private organizations.

8. What is the application process?

- All applicants will be provided a business proposal template which they are required to complete.
- The open period for submissions will be from September 17th, 2013 to October 15th, 2013.
- The completed proposal template along with the required documentation should be submitted by email to USADF on or before October 15th, 2013.
- Winners will be announced by November 22nd, 2013.

9. How will the call for applications be launched?

Through the USADF website, press releases, advertisement in local newspapers, and email.

10. How will the proposals be reviewed?

Shortlisted applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel comprised of technical experts in the field and representatives from both GE and USADF. A list of the reviewers will be announced when the Challenge launches.

11. What are the criteria for winning the Challenge?

The USADF/GE Off-Grid Energy Challenge is looking for concepts that have the potential to transform the operations of rural enterprises, businesses, and communities currently without electricity. This could be by supplying off-grid power to sustainable enterprises that benefit small businesses and grassroots beneficiaries. Creative and innovative solutions will be given higher consideration.



We will select the best 5- 10 projects that:

- Further develop, scale up or extend the use of proven technologies for off –grid energy.
- Benefit grassroots rural or urban populations currently underserved by utility companies.
- Demonstrate financial sustainability or the potential for financial sustainability.
- Are from businesses that have at least a two-year proven track record of experience.
- Bring leveraged resources from one or more other sources to meet the total financing requirements of the entire project.
- Innovate. A premium will be given to innovation – such as an innovative technology, a usage of technology that is an innovation for that country, or a creative improvement in how power needs are delivered or addressed.

12. How about good proposals are not awarded a grant?

With this multi-year challenge, proposals that don't receive an award in the first year can be revised and resubmitted to be considered in future rounds of funding.

13. Who is funding the Challenge and how will the awards be administered?

GE-Africa and USADF are co-funding the Challenge that will award grants totaling USD \$500,000 this year, \$1,000,000 in the second year, and \$500,000 in the third. USADF will administer the awards including the grant agreement, disbursement of funds, and reporting.

14. What benefit does the Challenge bring to countries in which it is launched?

- The Challenge seeks to provide energy in rural or urban populations currently underserved by existing utility companies.
- The Challenge seeks to drive economic activity. While eligible projects may include power to meet household consumer needs, emphasis is put on the delivery of power for productive or commercial activities including agricultural production and processing, off-farm businesses, commercial enterprises, and so on.
- The Challenge could benefit small and medium sized enterprises in the participating countries by promoting expansion of innovative solutions that further develop, scale-up, and/or extend the use of proven technologies for off-grid energy.

15. How can we get further information about the Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Innovation Challenge?

Information will be provided on the USADF website, through press releases, and through the Request for Proposal (RFP) documentation. The intention is to share all information openly and equally among all applicants.

For the application and more information, see www.usadf.gov or contact OffGridChallenge@usadf.gov